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Opinion/Feature | 17 August 2015 10:39 CET

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## Pastor Adeboye: "The Richest Man in the World"

By Femi Aribisala

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**"I have houses in at least 188 countries in the world, so I am richer than Bill Gates." (Adeboye).**

Recently, a friend took me to the jewel-in-the-crown of the Redeemed Christian Church of God; a glitzy parish called "City of David" in Victoria Island, Lagos. Displayed resplendently on a wall in the church-office is a design of their current building project; a 14 storey architectural extravaganza titled "Trinity Towers."

Is Redeemed still a church or is it now essentially a business concern? The Trinity Towers project shows the lines are now totally blurred. Jesus warns: "No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and Money." (Matthew 6:24). Nevertheless, this Tower of Babylon being built with church funds is designed both for the worship of God and for the worship of money.

The project is an appeal to crass commercialism; a blatant celebration of wealth. In this poverty-stricken Nigeria, the foundation of the building alone is expected to cost over 2 billion naira. Side-by-side with a 5,000 seat auditorium for church services are high-brow restaurants, cafeterias, indoor swimming pools, cinema halls, gymnasiums, retail shops, games arcades, lawn tennis courts, relaxation spots, and a helipad as the crowning glory. Of what relevance is all this "supermarket" in a church?

Anointing for carnality

A church-member, overwhelmed by the grandeur of it all, buttonholed me in the hallway. I did not know him from Adam, nevertheless, he held me hostage as he waxed lyrical about how the Redeemed Church was, to use his words: "taking over." "We have already got the vice-presidency," he said. (The vice-president of Nigeria is now a Redeemed pastor). "Next we will get the presidency," he continued; "and then we will get DSTV," (a South African satellite television network).

The anointing for this pride of life flows right from the top. The General Overseer of the Redeemed Church is Pastor Adeboye. A few years ago, he decided he needed a billion naira without which his "work of God" could not be done. So he confounded the Christian faith by establishing a "millionaire's club." To be a member, you had to hand over a million naira to him in Jesus' name.

Thereafter, he upped the ante by calling for a "billionaire's club." He announced that he would be



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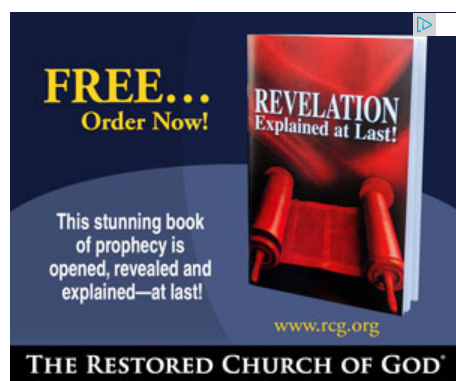
building an auditorium that can only be described as “fantabulous.” It would be a ginormous three kilometers in length and three kilometers in breadth. This project is clearly more designed to get Adeboye into the Guinness Book of World Records than it is to get the members of Redeemed into the kingdom of God.

Declared Adeboye on that occasion: “We need 1 billion naira from ten people. If you are one of them, please see my personal Secretary after we finish today.” Who are those likely to have this kind of money to give in the Nigeria of today except those who have cornered public funds? Thereafter, an announcer sought to know the members of the church who were “willing to join hands with our Father in the Lord to build a new auditorium to God’s glory.”

#### Vanity upon vanity

The proposed auditorium is not to the glory of God. The proposed auditorium is to the glory of Adeboye. Adeboye’s project is reminiscent of Saul’s, who built a monument to himself. (1 Samuel 15:12). Nowhere in the entire New Testament was money ever collected for putting up a building. Money was only collected for the poor. The temple of God is no longer a physical building. The temple of God is now Jesus Christ.

Pastor Adeboye is getting increasingly carried away by vanity. I have a tape of a question-and-answer session he had with his church-workers a number of years ago in which he boasted that the time would soon come when, before anybody could aspire to be president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, he would first have to talk to Redeemed Church. Nothing in the scriptures can be construed as suggesting this as one of the stated objectives of Jesus Christ.



A Redeemed church-member told me of another meeting he attended captioned: “A Day Out with the G.O.” It was a dinner for financial sponsors of one of the annual “Holy Ghost Festivals.” Pastor Adeboye boasted tongue-in-cheek on that occasion that the time would soon come when the Queen of England would plead to join Redeemed in order to work as an usherette. The audience reportedly responded with wild applause and shouts of “Amen.”

#### Richer than Bill Gates

At the just-concluded 63rd Annual Convention of the Redeemed Church, Adeboye declared that he is now richer than Bill Gates; widely acknowledged as the richest man in the world. He said: “I have houses in at least 188 countries in the world, where we have our

churches, so I am richer than Bill Gates. Each time I visit these countries, my children would be struggling and saying daddy, come and stay with me.”

These “houses” don’t belong to Adeboye; they belong to Redeemed church. Knowingly or unknowingly, Adeboye distorts the gospel. Jesus says: “All who have given up home or brothers and sisters or father and mother or children or land for me will be given a hundred times as much. They will also have eternal life.” (Matthew 19:29).

However, Jesus words are spirit. (John 6:63). Therefore, his “houses” are entirely spiritual, while Adeboye’s are physical. Jesus does not make his disciples richer than Bill Gates. Instead, he says: “God will bless you people who are poor. His kingdom belongs to you! But you rich people are in for trouble. You have already had an easy life!” (Luke 6:20/24).

Adeboye continued: “If I announce here that tomorrow morning, I need a car to travel to the new auditorium, how many cars do you think would be made available to me by you my children? Those of you that do not have a car of your own, very soon, God will give you your own cars. So, I am appealing to you to become an incurable soul winner before you leave this convention ground and your cup will overflow.”

#### Anathema to Christ

This is nothing but the enticing word of man’s wisdom. Believers don’t preach the gospel in order to receive cars. We do because God commands that we do so.

Jesus had neither chariots nor horses. He had no lands and houses. Indeed, he warned a prospective disciple who wanted to follow him they would not be staying at the “Sheraton Hotel:” “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” (Matthew 8:20).

Jesus does not speak like Adeboye. He says: “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master.” (Matthew 10:24-25). Jesus’ example is anathema to Adeboye’s declaration that he is now the richest



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man in the world.

This is the word of Jesus the Adeboyes of this age choose to ignore: "It's terribly hard for rich people to get into the kingdom of heaven! In fact, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into God's kingdom." (Matthew 19:23-24).

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Tony | 10/10/2015 2:38:00 AM

Why do people especially Africans have problems with the rich? Do you expect the church of God to be full of beggars? Have u ever thought of Solomon's wealth? Was it to the Glory of God? Sometimes we need to look at issues with a wider perspective. Jesus Christ also said the time is coming when anyone who "kills" you will think he is doing God a service. I'm am not condemning you in any way because your opinions are your own. However, you're making it sound as if Christians have to be the poor in this world! If 'houses' as used by Jesus are spiritual, are mothers and father and sisters and brothers also spiritual? If yes what does giving them up mean? you may not approve of a man of God's 'modus operandi' and you're free to comment about it but however, I suggest you do so in a way that will not sound like judgement. Because only the Lord has the right to judge! For the records, I am not his church member okay.

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